LOADSTAR LETTER #75

6502 Sighting On Fox's Futurama

By Jeff Jones. Comp.sys. cbm is abuzz over a recent airing of Fox's Futurama series. Bender, an alcoholic Robot whose main function is to bend things, was briefly shown *not* to have Intel inside. Everyone from Cameron Kaiser to Jim Butterfield is talking about it. I watched Futurama and never noticed.

Hunt & Replace: The Everyman Macro

By Jeff Jones. Plenty of people use hunt and replace and create a mess by removing all spaces or hard returns and then never use it again. Abandoning hunt and replace is a mistake. By automatically seeking out and altering text, hunt and replace can make the creation of documents faster as well as make your document more uniform. In The Write Stuff, CMDR-S starts search and replace. In SpeedScript and most

all PC programs, it's CTRL-H.

Hunt and replace is a simple macro. By macro, I mean a series of commands given within a program like The Write Stuff, which go through your document and do what you program it to. In essence, macros are really sub-programs that run within programs.

Hunt and replace is a part of most decent word processors. Basically, you program your computer to search for existing text and replace it with new text. Why would you do this when it's easier to just type it? Well, that's just it. It's not easier to just type it, not when you have 100 changes to make. Let's say you receive articles from Australians or Canadians who will almost always use British spellings of words like colour and programme. Instead of reading the whole file and fixing them for an American readership, it's simple to:

Search for: colour
Replace with: color

A couple of seconds later you have an all-American article. Of course Canadians are technically Americans, but you know what I mean. I also use search and replace to avoid typos. I don't like using caps lock or shift lock. I used to hold down shift with my pinky and type all-cap words such as REU or VIC. The problem is that I make tons more typos when I type like that. So I type them lowercase and then use search and replace, or replace all in the spell checker, to capitalize them later.

You can generate uniformity with search and replace. There is

a tendency for authors to use SCPU instead of SuperCPU. There are other keystroke-saving contractions which I don't like. In many articles, authors quickly contract the most important nouns, not for the sake of the reader, but out of convenience. I use hunt and replace to fix that and make it easier to read.. Of course this issue will be different since I want to actually show examples of banned text.

As suggested in the previous sentence, computers are literal, precise and quite stupid. If you tell them to jump off a cliff, they will with no hesitation. Remember I mentioned that I replace all instances of *programme*, the English spelling of *program*? Well what happens when I do this?

Search for: programme
Replace with: program

Works fine, right? *Wrong*! If you don't anticipate the literal actions of your computer, you'll find that **programme**d becomes programd and **programmer** becomes programer. This is a catastrophe. Of course it's a catastrophe easily fixable by a spell checker, but that's not what we want to do. We'd prefer if the catastrophe never occurred. Some processors have features like "match whole word only", which alone would fix this. Assuming we don't have this, we'll have to force the same feature. Can you guess how?

Search for: programme[space]
Replace with: program [space]

By adding a space to the end

of the word, we will eliminate a match with the aforementioned words.

But all spaces are not alike. One thing I do to avoid foul ups with spaces is:

Search for: [shift-space]
Replace with: [space]

Now my replacement is sure to work, right? But wait! There's more! What about Programme at the beginning of a sentence? It's capitalized. No match.

It seems reasonably safe to create the following search:

Search for: rogramme[space]
Replace with: rogram[space]

Since you're reasonably sure that the word rogramme isn't in your text, you can use the search. This will work on all instances, capitalized and not.

Of course there are other snags, such as the occurrence of the word at the end of a sentence or in a list, where there is no match for the space at the end. You can get around that with more searches.

Search and replace can destroy a document by removing too much or adding too much. When you approach a search mission, try to visualize your target within another word. Where might it unexpectedly appear in your document. Such forethought will save you much anguish.

ROBERT'S RULES OF COMPUTER ORDER

- You will never have an extra blank disk.
- If you do bring along a blank disk, you won't need it. If you don't bring along a blank disk, it will be the only available opportunity to obtain a copy of a hitherto unattainable, and uniquely appropriate program.
- If someone else is watching while you are doing anything on the computer, anything at all, it will screw up (that's a technical term).
- The percentage chances of screwing up increase in direct proportion to the size of your audience. No matter how simple it seems to you, your explanation will be more than they want to know.
- You will amaze yourself at how much you know. You will amaze your mother at how much you know about computers.
- You will always have one disk envelope too few. Or too many.
- The only pieces of data you will ever lose are the ones you were going to save just as soon as you finished typing a couple more lines.
- The update of your program will use the keys for something entirely different in this version than it did when you first learned it.
- You will not understand it the first time you read it in the manual.
- You will understand it better the next time you read the manual.
- For no discernible reason, when you are late for an interview and need a last minute copy of your resume your printer will go down. It will always go down. It doesn't care.
- Nowhere in your repair manual will it ever tell you what you really need to do--which is to turn the darn thing off and get yourself a cup of tea.
- You will never know what a user file is.
- The price of anything you buy will stay the same until the actual impact of your money on the bottom of the cash drawer, at which time it will automatically re-list itself in next Thursday's paper at 30% less.
- Staring at the screen for 97 continuous minutes will not necessarily reveal to you the secret location of any colon that should have been typed in as a semi. Or vice versa.
- It will always seem like your friend got a better deal.
- The 800 number will be busy.

Donated by:

Lord Ronin from Q-Link
Sensei David O.E. Mohr {go-dan}
Chancellor & Editor for Amiga-Commodore Users Group 447
SysOp Vacuum Tube BBS <Omni-128
503-325-2905 300-14.4k C/G-ascii-ansi

Kill Lines Algorithm: Applied Hunt & Replace

By Jeff Jones. While this article talks Commodore, it's helpful for any computer user on any platform. If you use a word processor with hunt and replace, its power might save you minutes or hours of editing. Edstar is Loadstar's 40-column line editor. I call it a line editor instead of a word processor because Edstar edits one line at a time. By the time you have two paragraphs, you really have perhaps 18 lines with hard returns at the end. Articles like this are written in a word processor. Word processors process documents, not lines or even paragraphs. There are no returns (ends of lines) unless you type them, even when your words wrap to the next line. When re-formatting an article, Edstar becomes unwieldy because you have to split and glue lines manually since each line has a life of its own. Any editor must convert from a line-oriented article to a paragraph-oriented article. The algorithm for doing this is rather simple:

1. Find all returns that aren't ends of paragraphs
2. Replace them with spaces

To search for a return, simply search for a back arrow in SpeedScript or The Write Stuff. We replace them with spaces because we want a space between each word. If we deleted each return (replaced with nothing) we would in actuality glue each last word of a line to the first word of the next line.

It gets more complicated. How do you get a computer to figure out which returns aren't end-of-paragraph markers?

If you look at this article and image a return at the end of each line, one thing becomes apparent: paragraphs start with an indentation. So our algorithm changes:

1. Find all returns followed by indentations and preserve them
2. Replace any leftover returns with spaces.

But wait! There's more! What if we have multiple returns like the ones we might have to separate sections. Loadstar often has blank lines between every paragraph. Those are intentional. We want them to stay.

1. Find all returns followed by indentations and preserve them
2. Find double returns and preserve them
3. Replace any leftover returns with spaces.

But wait! There's more. What if there's a list in the article that's not indented the normal five spaces. We want to preserve the hard returns in that list.

1. Find all returns followed by indentations and preserve them
2. Find double returns and preserve them
3. Find all returns followed by any space and preserve them
4. Replace any leftover returns with spaces.

When I say preserve, I mean temporarily replace the text with something else, preferably something unlikely. For the past ten years, I have used this sequence.

Find: ⇐⇐
Replace with: %%

Find: ⇐[space]
Replace with: &&

Find: ⇐
Replace with: [space]

At this point all lines have been killed, but your paragraphs all run together and have a bunch of %%s and &&s throughout. This is fine. I chose those symbols because they are highly unlikely to appear together within text.

Now comes the second half:

Find: %%
Replace with: ⇐⇐

Find: &&
Replace with: ⇐[space]

Now you have free-flowing text with returns only at the end of paragraphs or indented lists.

Writing And Submitting Articles for the Loadstar Letter

By Jeff Jones. As newsletters go, the Loadstar letter pays quite liberally. With circulation slowly falling, $10-$20 per article is the going rate. If you check out Writer's Digest's *2000 Writer's Market*, that's great for a newsletter. Some authors opt for a Loadstar Software trade, going for back issues or products worth much more than $20.

I'm primarily interested in how-to articles. Like how to use The Write Stuff to upload a virus to an alien mothership.

If you want to submit a Loadstar Letter article, it's best to submit on disk. I have no desire to re-type or OCR any article.

Email to Jeff@loadstar.com is the preferred method of delivery provided the text is formatted properly. I can easily convert anyone's Email article into properly formatted paragraphs, even though Email automatically has hard Returns at the end of every line. Of course I don't want those carriage returns because my columns will likely be of different width(s) than yours. I use my The Write Stuff kill-line-feed algorithm to kill the lines. But, smart as my algorithm is, your article might not look exactly as you want it. If you don't indent lists, you may have carriage returns exactly where you intend them to be and my algorithm will kill them. The best thing to do to get me an article exactly as you wrote it, is to attach a SpeedScript, The Write Stuff, MS Word, WordPerfect or RTF. The thing these files have in common is that there is no carriage return until you press return.

Despite all this, you may send the article in the body of your Email letter. I can kill the line feeds. It's referable to attach the article if you've written in in The Write Stuff. But you'll make more work for me if you don't convert it to ASCII first. This is because I'll have to first convert your TWS file with The Write Stuff after extracting it from my Email either to a real C-64 or to an emulator.
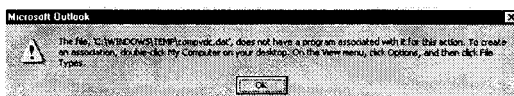
One foolproof way to do convert to ASCII is to simply start The Write Stuff fresh and load your article file. Next Press CTRL and then hold down A until the screen looks garbled. Remember to hold down the A because if you don't, it will convert to PetASCII. SuperCPU users probably can't help converting to ASCII anyway because of timing. When the screen looks pretty much unreadable, you have ASCII. Just save your article as article.txt and your article is net-ready.

The reason I say do this from a freshly booted TWS is because the conversion algorithm toggles. So if you have already converted to ASCII, it will try to convert from whatever you have loaded (whether PetASCII, screen code or ASCII) to screen code. That blindness is rather unfortunate.

It's a good idea to master the TWS ASCII save routine if you want to send articles as attachments to PC or MAC editors. It's probably no secret that I now earn a living on a PC and create the newsletter on a PC, and thus converting Commodore formats means extra work for me.

While it doesn't matter to me, it might help your plight if you name your file as filename.txt before sending it. That way even a brainless PC user can read your file by simply opening it. If you send it as *t.file* or –article, the average PC user would never be able to read it. They would see something like this:

This box basically says, "Even though this is a simple text file, I don't know what it is because it's not named file.txt"

Review: "Back In Time II" Evolution Before Your Ears

Date: November 11, 1999
Rating: (****) 4 out of 5 stars
By The Shark (INC Press) -- Nearly two years after the successful debut of "Back In Time", Chris Abbott and friends are back with yet another brilliant tribute to Commodore 64 music. This CD, though, isn't simply a continuation of where "Back In Time" (Back In Time #1) left off. Rather, with "Back In Time II", you hear first hand how C64 cover music undergoes a daring evolution before your ears. What is this evolution I write of? Well, first we must go back in time to revisit the first CD. Two years ago, when it came to professional C64 covers, there wasn't much to be found. You had your choice between an occasional amateur MP3 from the web or a few of Chris Huelsbeck's CDs. During this time, the novelty alone of a C64 cover would be more than enough to satisfy C64 music fans. All of that changed with the release of Back In Time #1. The professional covers on the CD suddenly raising the standards for all those who attempted to follow. Simply adding synth drums to the background of a SID was no longer enough. Sub-par covers with cheap MIDI instruments were rightfully forced into extinction.

Although Back In Time #1 raised the standards, one could say that it was a CD that cautiously tested the waters. It would be comparable to your first trip to the ocean. You slowly walk in, gently placing each foot onto the wet sand below until you are waist-

deep. As the waves splash on you, you feel that you can go no further. You have achieved much, but you also realize that once you overcome the initial excitement, someday you'll be able to go further. Back In Time #1 brought us those first steps. The covers were undoubtedly exciting and the best to date, but the Back In Time #1 musicians often stayed within preset boundaries. Well, except for a few occasional signs of daringness (Wizball, Crazy Comets, and Delta-High Score come to mind).

If Back In Time #1 was the first steps into the ocean, Back In Time #2 is a head-first dive into deep blue seas. This is clearly evident as soon as the first track glowingly reads [00:01] on your CD player. The rich sound and powerful music on this CD have definitely reached new levels previously unheard in present-day C64 covers.

How did Chris and company make such progress? For starters, Chris has unselfishly used some of his earnings from Back In Time #1 to upgrade his musical equipment. I've also mentioned how it has been nearly two years since the release of Back In Time #1. Just like fine wine, Chris and his team have progressed over time. And most interestingly of all, Chris' team for Back In Time #2 has undergone some unexpected changes. Temporarily absent are Rob Hubbard and Chris Huelsbeck. Taking their places are Peter Connelly, Jogeir Liljedahl, Mark Cooksey, and Fred Gray (among others). A little background information on these guys. Peter is a professional game musician who was recently hired to arrange the music for Tomb Raider 4. Jogeir, a well-

known composer among the MOD/XM world, has just released a professional CD of his own arrangements. Mark and Fred are two famous SID musicians from the '80s, as I am sure many of you know. Note that all of these artists have at least one thing in common -- they are veterans from the C64 world who understand the importance of SID music. Despite their common background, however, each of these artists brings their own diverse sound to this CD. Let's look in detail at each cover on this CD:

#01 - Aztec Challenge

Chris thought so highly of Peter Connelly's cover that he designated an Aztec theme for the cover of his CD -- and rightfully so. The tune is based on Paul Norman's primitive but catchy theme from his popular 1984 game of the same name. I am amazed at how Peter transformed this tune to an orchestra style cover with such grace. The tune also wonderfully preserves the jungle sound found in the original SID (the drums are perfect, but the small dash of jingle bells could go).

#02 - Galway is God 2000

One word: PHENOMENAL! Covering Galway's Rambo and Green Beret, Jogeir's track uncontrollably makes you turn the volume control higher. From the opening Morse code sequence, which is marvelous, to the transition into the dark Green Beret, this tune symbolizes the effort expected for legendary SIDs such as Galway's. Incidentally, for those of you who have heard Jogeir's earlier XM cover, you'll worship the much improved synth version on Back In Time #2.

#03 - Warhawk

If you enjoy Hubbard's Warhawk, then you'll love what Peter and Chris have done with this cover. The melody and instruments are a great fit, especially the high-pitched spacey sound for the main voice. The tune finishes strong with a killer solo at 2:45 as well as another mini-solo at the very end.

#04 - Roland's Rat Race

Jogeir almost pulled off another great cover, but he slightly stumbled on this one. Overall, the cover is well done and has that wonderful power also found in his other covers. The complaint for this version is the lack of the pulsating notes Galway used in the original SID (well, I can faintly hear them in the background, so I guess they are "there"). Those pulsating tones were one of the main reasons for the success of the original SID, so why did Jogeir underestimate their importance? I hate to dwell on this little item since the rest of the cover is quite good, but...

#05 - Batman the Caped Crusader.

Fred Gray's cover starts off well, and the main voice is true to the original. Sadly, though, the magic of the original SID version is not found in this cover. The SID version starts off slowly and gradually builds itself up whereas the cover here starts off too fast. In addition, the style of the cover doesn't ring true with the original. Finally, the entire ending seems a little forced. Although I have these complaints about the cover, it still is enjoyable to listen to. It definitely has a professional touch, and I look forward to more covers from Fred.

#06 - Terra Cresta

Jogeir once again shines true with another great Galway cover. The

crackling thunder at the start sets an aggressive mood and from there the tune only becomes more angry. And for those of you who remember how the original version's filter effects shook your foundation, this cover does a great job in preserving that deep vibrating sound as well. This is a welcomed surprise since many cover artists have a hard time when it comes to recreating SID filter effects. I do have one very minor complaint about this cover. Jogeir uses a few SID sounds (directly from the SID) in this cover. The problem is that they sound too primitive compared with the other instruments. This is not to say that all SID sounds are primitive, but the ones in the original Terra Cresta are. Nonetheless, this cover is pure energy and overall ranks as one of my favorites on the CD.

#07 - Scarabaeus
As with Back In Time #1, the Back In Time team is once again pleasantly unpredictable. Darren Izzard chooses a very interesting tune to cover since Scarabaeus isn't by a well-known SID composer, but that certainly doesn't mean it should be ignored. There are actually tons of splendid SID tunes from lesser-known composers that are just waiting to be modernized. Thankfully, the Back In Time team feels the same way. The meditative melody of this cover is true to the original as are the selected instruments. Darren has squeezed as much as one can out of this cover.

#08 - Rydeen (Daley Thompson's Decathlon Loader)
Chris and Waz pull off a spirited cover of Galway's earliest SIDs improving the original version many times over. The style of this tune hopes to recreate an early synth sound -- which it certainly does -- and this may not please some people. But if you enjoy Galway's original (which is a cover as well), you won't be disappointed with this version.

#09 - Ghosts 'n Goblins
Mark Cooksey proves here that he is more than just a SID composer. The more you listen to Mark's Ghost 'n Goblins, the more it will grow on you. This up-beat version of the original comes across wonderfully, and the extra wind and thunder sounds help create that haunting effect found in the original SID version. I also found the baroque piano used through out the track a brilliant touch, especially the solo. My only complaint (sadly, I can be too picky at times) is that Mark slightly altered the beginning of this classic tune. Those ghost moaning sounds of the original SID are its signature, and they should have been covered more accurately. Attempting to become creative or radically different during classic SID sequences is not recommended.

#10 - Ivory Tower (Helikopter Jagd).
My first thoughts when hearing this tune were, "This is Jogeir?" The melody is again dead center, but different instruments should have been selected. Mainly, the two main instruments used on this cover just don't suit it well. Also, the background drums seem to be beating too fast. I should note that I have heard the original version of this tune in the movie "The Neverending Story" so perhaps my expectations are little high. I keep thinking to myself that this SID would sound wonderful if done in a similar style as Delta-High Score on Back In Time #1. That is, done with a softer, mystical touch.

#11 - Forbidden Forest
Peter has done it again. There is no doubt in my mind that I am in love with this tune. This is movie sound track quality. Connelly has taken a very primitive Paul Norman SID and worked some splendid magic on it. The tune starts with a dark synth cover of the SID and then matures into an original orchestra work of art. I love how the tune hypnotizes me with a heavenly harp and a soft flute only to snap me out of my daze with some cymbals and rolling drums. I couldn't have dreamed of more perfect music to represent a walk through a forbidden forest. Wonderful!

#12 - Wizball 2000.
It is interesting to hear the tune again considering that it was on Back In Time #1, but make no mistake, Tonka's version definitely has its own charm. It is an up-tempo version of the Galway classic with some fabulous remixing. The first half picks up steam followed by a pumping second half. The tune ends with a soft cover of the original that works surprisingly well considering that the majority of the tune is in jam mode. Wizball 2000 is one strangely addictive tune, indeed.

#13 - Driller.
I am not sure what Darren Izzard's musical background is, but I do know that his Driller cover blows away the original SID version. Fans of the original version will not be disappointed with this cover. The original version by Matt Gray is more of an atmospheric setting tune rather than a tune that demands your attention. This atmospheric characteristic, in both the SID and Izzard's version, sets it apart from many of the tunes on Back In Time #2.

#14 - Thalamusik 2000.

Although Chris Abbott covered this tune (Sanxion) on Back In Time #1, he has decided to include a cleaned version of Rob Hubbard's famous Zzap! 64 version on this CD for historical reasons. I applaud this decision since the previous versions available elsewhere are not as clear as this version. Although I enjoy Chris' version on Back In Time more so than Hubbard's remake, Hubbard's version is definitely enjoyable as well. One twist to Hubbard's version is that he has put a slight Jarre touch in it (e.g., the background voices and noises found through out).

#15 - Comic Bakery. Tomas Danko, a well-known SID composer, finishes off the CD with a final Galway cover. Danko's cover has two distinct halves -- one true to the original and the other a techno misadventure. The first half is quite good with the main voice being powerfully represented (although the techno background style could be toned down). The second half, though, is not pleasing to the ears. This is mainly due to a series of notes, sounding something like bwa-bwa-boooh-bwa, that repeat over 50 times during the second half. In all fairness, I should admit that I've never really been a fan of hardcore techno. So all in total, Back In Time #2 features seven tracks covering Galway tunes. It would be an understatement to say that Galway fans will definitely appreciate this CD, and so will SID fans in general. The reason is simple. The CD is full of bold covers that leave no prisoners. From Connelly's unique orchestra-style covers to Jogeir's powerful Galway remakes, this CD is pure SID evolution. In a world where sequels often flop, it's refreshing to see Chris and co. break that trend with Back In Time #2.

Purchase Back In Time at www.64audio.com/

The S-video Commodore

By John Elliott. When I have my first caffeine hit in the morning (cola not coffee), visual fuzziness is replaced by sharp relief. Objects have distinctly edged borders. Colors are brighter. I had a similar reaction when I first viewed Commodore text and images on my 28 inch television through s-video.

Definitions

My understanding of s-video is that it maintains a separation of luminance (light) and chrominance (color) signals up until the image is projected on a screen or the television tube. My 12 inch black and white TV has luminance (light and shape outlines), but no chrominance. Composite image monitors for computers and televisions combine color, line and light to create an often satisfactory video image. This blending of attributes at an early stage in the display process results in compromises. Our Commodore monitors can be s-video devices, since they have inputs for separate RCAs for color and light.

VHS-S (sometimes called S-VHS) is a special tape format that preserves and plays back in special VCRs a higher resolution image than standard VHS. VHS-S and S-VIDEO are not related. Having said that, the "s-video in" on my Samsung TV says "S-VHS"; the on screen prompt though, correctly calls it "S-VIDEO".

The above descriptions are based on reading a number of sometimes contradictory articles. Commodore users' guides and Programmers' Reference guides do not discuss s-video (sometimes also called "Y/C" [y= light, c= chrominance]). Perhaps a VCR expert could modify my comments.

We Already Have It

My impression is that if we use a Commodore compatible monitor in 40 columns, we are using s-video, so long as we use two "RCA ins. This might partly explain why monitor text or images look so much better than the same visual information sent to a television- even if sent via a RCA cord. The "video in" on a television is composite (combined light and color), not separated signal or s-video.

Television and Commodore

If we restrict ourselves to Commodore compatible computer monitors, a s-video discussion is academic. If we move to television, however, we will suffer because of its composite images. There are several reasons for using a television as a display device.

Size Matters

I think my Commodore monitors are all 14 inches diagonal of which about 13 inches are viewable (overscan). My Samsung TXF2899 has more than triple that viewable area and as a bonus, a virtually flat screen. I have attended for nearly two decades educational and computer presentations in which the speaker tried to make the points visual by connecting a computer to an overhead projector display. If font

size were appropriate, and the room was very dark, we could follow the presentation. More recently speakers have used pc's with video cards, which they have linked to classroom sized televisions. The results are preferable to the overheads, since the lights can be left on.

My c64 with 40 columns and The Write Stuff word processor guarantees that all text will be visible at the back of a classroom or meeting room- if a large television is the display device.

For a couple of years I had a student who was legally blind. She could however read a computer screen if her nose was almost touching the screen.

Another argument for use of a large screen is that more information can be fitted on that screen, by shrinking font size.

I was however reluctant both at meetings and with that student to output my Commodore text and pictures to a large television. The image would have been large enough to read, but blurred-especially when enlarged. I noticed on large televisions that Commodore colors combine at color boundaries. The edges of text were fuzzy.

An S-VIDEO Revelation

These problems were solved when I recently connected my c64 to the s-video in on my Samsung television. There is no color run. Letters do not have fuzzy edges. Everything stands out with sharp edges. The downside is that every pixel is visible. With color pictures, that is not a problem. Text however is composed of distinct round pixels. The artificial 80 columns of the Novaterm communications program is hard to read, since ghosting of overlapping

shapes is visible on a large screen s-video screen. On the smaller Commodore screen, or the composite television screen, the overlaps blur together.

I used Autograph to display a large number of koalas and doodles in s-video. Commodore pictures have never looked so good at any size.

There may be reasons to stay with the Commodore monitor then, depending on the program. Most often though, s-video television would be preferable. If your only display device were a 14 inch television, even its image would look better with s-video since the color and light would be kept separate. I suspect though, there are few 14 inch televisions that have s-video. My 20 inch Samsung though, does have a s-video in.

The s-video VDC

Since I had already used a custom cable to display my 128 80 column output in monochrome on my televisions, I decided to try the same approach with s-video. While the theory of what I did escapes me, I was able to with a connecting patch cord link my 80 column custom cable to the s-video cable. It provided me with a monochrome extremely sharp 80 column screen on my television. Every letter of The Write Stuff text was clearly readable across the room- even though smaller than c64 output because of the 80 columns.

I think Rod Gasson's Browser 128 text reader allows a wide range of font sizes. Although some fonts were too small to easily read on my 1902 80 column screen, outputted to a large television screen with s-video, they should be easily

usable. This would considerably increase the number of words that could appear on one screen. The same argument could be made for the use of smaller fonts with Geos applications. More columns could for example appear on screen in readable form with Geos 128 in 80 columns displayed on a large television screen through s-video.

Sources and Costs

My cable was custom made by Jose Dominguez of Videoware Inc. If you tell Jose that you are using the cable for your Commodore computer, they will adjust the price so that it reflects the lower relative value of our platforms. You will first need the kind of Commodore video cable that has at least two male RCAs on the monitor end. Jose will make you a cable that has two female RCAs on one end and a male s-video connector on the other.

They can be reached at:

Videoware Inc.
711 E. Maine St.
Riverton, WY 82501
USA

videoware@yahoo.com
http://www.videoware1.com

VDC Output to a Composite Monitor

By John Elliott. Some 128 owners have blocked the seventh pin on their RGB out cable. This provides monochrome images on a composite monitor such as the 1702 and 1802. For those who do not have access to a RGB capable monitor such as the 1902 series, this permits text work without too much loss of function.

Aside from Basic 8 based

programs, I have seen two graphical enhancements for the 80 column screen. Ultra hires and VDC Graphics both use only one foreground and one background color. While these programs allow color selection, RGB to composite gives only a white background and black foreground.

Television Output

Although I have several 80 column monitors, I wanted a RGB to composite cable. I reasoned that anything that worked on a composite monitor should also appear, perhaps slightly fuzzy, on a television. If it could be viewed on television it could be recorded to tape.

Since I am not technically enhanced, I bought two slightly different cables from Paul Rosenzweig. One is a straight RGB to composite cable with a single RCA out. The other cable inserts into both the composite and RGB outs on the computer and has a single composite out for the monitor end. A manual switch allows alternating between modes with the same monitor, without disconnecting cables.

Picture in a Picture

With television output, I was able to send to my 28 inch Samsung and adjust its brightness on 4 levels. I was also able to use picture in a picture and alternate whether the 80 column output was on the main or pip screen. I could put simultaneously the 80 columns and TV images or 80 columns and 40 columns on the screen. The 40 columns could come from the same 128 switched to 40 column mode, or from a separate VIC 20, c64, or Plus 4. This pip possibility though is more in the nature of stupid pet tricks, since text in pip is too small to read.

Television

The late Ben Johnson, the creator of 4scan, used only the 40 column version of The Write Stuff, although he owned a 128. He told me that since he was using a 12 inch television set for a monitor he would not be able to use the 80 column mode.

My RGB to composite cable by itself would not solve his problem. The problem would be how to connect the cable to the television, since it did not have a RCA in. I have a VCR whose receiver no longer works. It does however have a RCA video in. I ran my custom cable to the VCR. I then connected the antenna out on the VCR to the antenna in on the TV. While not quite as sharp as the image on a composite monitor, the black and white text was quite usable with a word processor.

Additional Advantages of 80 Column Composite

The RGB to composite cable is necessary for someone who cannot obtain an 80 column monitor. The composite 80 column conversion however opens up several other possibilities. Two screens can be simultaneously viewed on a pip television. Videotapes of the 80 column work can be made. PC's can more easily grab the 80 column 128 screen if they have a video import card.

The 80 column image can be made as large as the biggest available television screen. The c64 is an excellent text display device to use in presentations since its 40 column text is twice as large as normal pc output. 80 column text on a larger screen television is still adequately large to show for example the output of a text browser such as Lynx or W3M. The text and images will be of higher definition than 40 column output, since twice as many columns are used per letter in 80 columns.

Sources:

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Note: Paul has only a few of these cords. He has however "cornered the market" on power cords and connecting cords for Commodore products.

Lodestar, The Definition

Forwarded by Gaelyne Gasson. A.Word.A.Day is a really neat mailing list for people like me who like learning about words. The word for today just happens to fit a very well known company that supports us Commodore folks. Their website URL is: http://www.loadstar.com/
lodestar also loadstar (LOAD-stahr) noun
1. A star, especially Polaris, that is used as a point of reference.
2. A guiding principle, interest, or ambition.
[Middle English lodesterre : lode, way + sterre, star.]

Webster's Millennial Dictionary Of Female Terms

Airhead (er*hed) n. What a woman intentionally becomes when pulled over by a policeman.

Argument (ar*gyou*ment) n. A discussion that occurs when you're right, but he just hasn't realized it yet.

Balance the checkbook (bal*ens da chek*buk) v. To go to the cash machine and hit "inquire."

Bar-be-que (bar*bi*q) n. You bought the groceries, washed the lettuce, chopped the tomatoes, diced the onions, marinated the meat and cleaned everything up, but he "made the dinner."

Blond jokes (blond joks) n. Jokes that are short so men can understand them.

Cantaloupe (kant*e*lope) n. Gotta get married in a church.

Clothes dryer (kloze dri*yer) n. An appliance designed to eat socks.

Diet soda (dy*it so*da) n. A drink you buy at a convenience store to go with a half pound bag of M&Ms.

Eternity (e*ter*ni*tee) n. The last two minutes of a football game.

Exercise (ex*er*siz) v. To walk up and down a mall, occasionally resting to make a purchase.

Grocery List (grow*ser*ee list) n. What you spend an hour and a half writing, then forget to take it with you to the store.

Hair Dresser (hare dres*ser) n. Someone who is able to create a style that you will never be able to duplicate. See "Magician."

Hardware Store (hard*war stor) n. Similar to a black hole in space-if he goes in, he isn't coming out anytime soon.

Childbirth (child*brth) n. You get to go through 30 hours of contractions; he gets to hold your hand and say "focus... breathe...push..."

Lipstick (lip*stik) n. On your lips: color to enhance the beauty of your mouth. On his collar: coloring only a tramp would wear.

Park (park) v/n. Before children, a verb meaning "to go somewhere and neck" After children, a noun meaning a place with a swing set and a slide.

Patience (pa*shens) n. The most important ingredient for dating, marriage, and children. See also "tranquilizers"

Valentine's Day (val*en*tinz dae) n. A day when you have dreams of a candlelight dinner, diamonds and romance, but consider yourself lucky to get a card.

Waterproof Mascara (Wah*tr*pruf mas*kar*ah) n. Comes off if you cry, shower or swim, but will not come off if you try to remove it.

Zillion (zil*yen) n. The number of times you ask someone to take out the trash, then end up doing it yourself anyway.